

Zero Hour

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Summary: A story about a squad of marines and their fight for survival. Ch. 6 up.

1. Arrival

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****Zero Hour****

Chapter One: Arrival

01:30, October 20 2552 (Military Calendar),

ODA-142 Cairo Station, orbiting Earth, Sol System

(10 Minutes to Zero Hour)

Staff Sergeant Daniel Williams sat at a video phone booth in Recreation R-01 on the Orbital Defence Platform Cairo. He was average height, slightly muscular and had light brown hair that was slightly longer than regulation length. He was calling his ex-girlfriend Anna to see how she was doing after her parents died when Reach fell. They were technicians stationed on board one of Reach's OPDs. The view screen on the video phone came to life showing, a girl in her mid-twenties.

"Hi Anna, how're you holding up?" Daniel asked.

"Hi Danny, I'm alright, it's just a bit difficult you know," She said moving her long blonde hair away from her face.

"Yeah I know, just don't do what I did when my parents died and join the Marine Corps," He said with a slight smile, "So, how is everyone?"

"They're good, Jessica is being a pain in the butt as always," She

said laughing slightly, "What about you? You killed anymore bad guys?"

"I'm fine, I've killed a few," He thought back to his time spent on Halo, the Flood and watching he team mates get turned into combat forms. "Hey, in about 4 minutes put the news on, they'll be showing the award ceremony and you'll get to see the Master Chief."

"Really? Cool. I'll put it on now so that I don't forget." She got up and walked over to the TV remote showing her lovely figure.

Why did we break up? Danny thought to himself.

"I did it, so can I call you later?" She asked.

"Yeah sure," Danny replied.

"Oh Danny, thanks for ringing me it meant a lot,"

"Anytime, see ya," The view screen went back to showing a key pad.

Danny Williams got up and walked over to Corporal Charles Ferguson, one of his men. Charlie was the heavy weapons specialist which meant that he was very muscular. He was also a skin head and very scary in a dark alley. Charlie got up from the video phone booth that he was at.

"Hey sarge, Anna alright?" He asked.

"She seams alright but I'm not that sure, how about your parents?" Danny replied.

"My mom got her pacemaker installed and she feels a lot better,"

"That's great; do you want to watch the award ceremony?"

"Yeah why not." They walked to a video screen where it was being shown. The camera was focused on the Master Chief and Sergeant Major Avery Johnson. A marine walked behind Lord Hood and whispered into his ear. He then turned to Cortana and a couple seconds later an image of Covenant ships appeared on the view screen.

"Damn, looks like they found us." A marine next to them said. Everyone in the room walked over to the weapons racks and picked up either a BR55 Battle Rifle or M7 SMG. Both Danny and Charlie chose Battle Rifles.

"All hands report to battle stations, this is not a drill. I repeat, this is not a drill." Cairo Stations Defence Coordinator blurted over the intercom.

The doors for the hallway connecting Recreation R-01 and the Bridge opened, Sergeant Johnson walked in with a portable M247 GP Machine Gun Turret. He was followed by a few Marines and the Master Chief.

"Field of fire on that bulkhead. As soon as that door opens, let'em have it" Johnson ordered as he set up his machine gun.

01:40

(Zero Hour)

The bulkhead started glowing as the Covenant started to cut through it and within seconds the bulkhead fell apart, Grunts swarming into the room followed by a few Elites. Everyone started firing, Grunts getting decapitated and their methane tanks exploding.

An Elite had snuck behind where Daniel and Charlie were shooting from. They heard bones crunch and turned around to see the Master Chief whose fist was covered with the Elite's blood.

"Thanks Chief." Charlie said. The Master Chief replied by nodding.

"Look out they're coming from above." Sergeant Johnson shouted as two Elites jumped down from the floor above them. One of them grabbed a Marine by the throat crushing his windpipe.

"I'm out," Danny shouted.

"Hey." A marine shouted throwing him two clips.

"Thanks man."

Danny and Charlie moved behind an Elite shooting it in the back. A few rounds piercing the Elites shield, disfiguring its left shoulder and destroying its shield generator. It screamed in pain, turning round to see its attackers.

"Hey squid-face, eat this," Charlie shouted at it, shooting rounds at its head. Brain, blood and bone spraying everywhere.

"All clear." Danny shouted.

They cleared the next hallway, killing everything in site. The Master Chief went up the staircase next to them alone.

"Wonder where he's going." Charlie said.

"Borders in Habitat Alpha." The Defence Coordinator said.

"We better go and help those guys out." Danny said.

They ran down a series of hallways, until they got to Habitat Alpha. Danny signalled them to stop and crouch. He poked his head around the corner.

"I see twoâ€¦ scratch that, four elites and quite a few grunts." He said. "Ideas?"

"We draw them towards us and throw a few frags in. We then mop up the rest of 'em." Charlie whispered.

"I like it. Only one problem, we don't have any frags."

"Yes we do." Charlie got one out of his pouches. Danny smiled. He lifted his right hand up, slowly counting down with his fingers.

Threeâ€|twoâ€|one. He fired a couple rounds at a few grunts. Their tanks ignited killing them. The rest of them ran over to the grunts badly burned body parts, trying to see where the shots had come from.

"Now." Danny ordered. Charlie threw the frags, killing most of the grunts and two of the elites.

"One Elite each, take them out before the grunts."

They slowly walked in firing at the Elites. The Elite that Danny was shooting at shields collapsed allowing a barrage of bullets to puncture its armor. It looked up in shock and collapsed. He turn to Charlie's Elite and emptied his clip into its shields, collapsing them. Charlie finished it off with a headshot. Just as they were finishing off the grunts a fire team ran in.

"Sorry guys, parties over." Danny shouted over to them.

"Was it a good one?" The Sergeant leading them asked.

"Amazing." Danny said smiling.

A green plasma bolt struck one of the Marines helmet, knocking it off.

"Take cover." The other Sergeant screamed. Within seconds 30 Grunts and 10 Elites had flooded into the room. One marine got stuck by plasma grenade, his entire body was vaporised by the blast.

"They just keep on coming." Charlie shouted.

"They better stop soon because I'm on my last clip," Danny replied pumping lead into the Grunts that were advancing towards their position. "I'm out of ammo."

That was the first chapter. Please R&R

2. Never Ending Story

****Zero Hour****

Chapter Two: A Never Ending Story

01:52, October 20 2552 (Military Calendar),

ODA-142 Cairo Station, orbiting Earth, Sol System.

"Hey Staff Sergeant, there's a weapons rack in the corridor to your right, if you want I could send two guys with you." The Sergeant shouted.

"Keep you guys here, I'll go alone," Danny replied, he turned to Charlie. "I need you sidearm and two clips."

Charlie nodded and withdrew his M6G sidearm and two clips.

"Here you go boss."

"Thanks." Danny ran down the corridor, duel wielding M6Gs. Just as he was at the weapons rack, he heard a noise to his left. He peered around the corner; it was a grunt playing with its plasma pistol. He snuck up behind it, withdrew his combat knife and cut the pipe connecting it to its methane tank. The grunt rolled about on the floor for a few seconds, trying to breathe, until it finally died. Danny walked over to the weapons rack to see 6 MA5Cs.

"So they did bring these out," he muttered.

He grabbed one and pulled the clips out of the other 5, putting them into pouches. There were footsteps to his left. Danny ran into the room next to him, it was the quarters for a very untidy marine. He peered out the door, there was an Elite wielding a Carbine. That Carbine could kill him quickly, especially if the Elite could pull off a head shot from less than a meter. Danny waited until it was a few meters away and opened fire. Almost all the bullets from the MA5C hit their target thanks to its improved accuracy. The Elite turned round and started taking shots with his Carbine, a few rounds hitting the wall above Danny's head. The MA5C's clip went dry, he threw it down and got out both M6Gs, 4 rounds hit the shield collapsing it letting the rest of the high explosive rounds do what they were designed to do, kill. The Elite lay in a crumpled heap. Danny holstered one M6G and put the other one into a pocket. He grabbed the MA5C off the floor and put a fresh clip in. He made sure that there was no one else around and ran back to the others.

02:00, October 20 2552 (Military Calendar),

ODA-142 Cairo Station, orbiting Earth, Sol System.

"Here's your gun and clips back." Danny said hiding behind a box next to Charlie.

"Thanks, did you get what you wanted sarge?" Charlie replied, killing a few grunts.

"Yeah, I did." Danny showed him his MA5C.

"Sweet!"

Danny fired a short burst at the endless swarm of grunts, killing a few of them. There was gunfire coming from the other side of the room. Everyone poked their heads over the boxes that they were hiding behind, it was 3 marines. Danny smiled when he saw their faces.

"Took you guys long enough." He shouted.

"Sorry sir, we ran into a bit trouble on the way," The female marine shouted back. She had a slim figure, lightly tanned skin and a little bit of brown hair sticking out of the back of her helmet.

"Hey Jessica, James, Tom, you got any spare battle rifle clips?" Charlie shouted

"Yeah man, when do you want 'em?" Lance Corporal Tom Ramirez replied.

"In a minute,"

"No problem."

The Covenant was surrounded, know where to run or hide. The last remaining Elite was starting to get angry.

"Flannigan, Thompson, focus fire on that Elite." Danny ordered.

"Yes sir," The pair shouted simultaneously. A barrage of bullets slammed into the Elite, collapsing its shields and killing it within seconds.

"Ramirez, do your thing." Danny shouted.

"Alrightâ€|.and yes sir." He replied. Tom Ramirez got his portable machine gun set up and started firing at the Grunts, igniting methane tanks and sending body parts flying. Within a matter of seconds the room was empty.

"Regroup." Danny ordered.

Private Jessica Flannigan, Private First Class James Thompson and Private Tom Ramirez walked over to him. Both of the male marines were muscular. James' hair had a red tinge to it that contrasted with his pale white skin and Tom had the darkest brown hair you had ever seen which went nicely with his deeply tanned skin.

"Here are those clips Charlie," Tom said, handing Charlie the clips.

"Thanks." He replied.

"Hey sarge, you'll never guess what happened to the Malta," James said.

"What?"

"It blew up."

"Awe man, some of the guys that I used to be in a fire team with were on there." Danny looked at the floor.

"We have borders in Habitat Delta." The Defence Coordinator said calmly over the loudspeaker.

Danny ignored it, he was exhausted from the fight and the lack of sleep he has been having for the last few days. The other team started walking in the direction of Habitat Delta.

"We got this one." The sergeant said walking away.

"Are we just going to sit here?" Jessica asked.

"Until we get called somewhere or they ask for more men to go to Habitat Delta, we are staying here." Danny replied. "If you want to do something you can secure the perimeter."

Everyone sat down, please that they could get some rest.

"I need a squad in Habitat Delta." The Defence Coordinator screamed

down the intercom.

"Alright, lets move out."

After a few minutes of running they got there. It was a mess, dead and wounded marines everywhere.

"Flannigan, Ramirez help the wounded, Thompson, Ferguson, with me."

Jessica and Tom dragged a few of the wounded marines to safety, filling their wounds with biofoam and bandaging them up. Meanwhile, Danny, Charlie and James were throwing grenades and shooting, trying to kill as many Covenant as they could.

"I only see 14 left," A frag detonated "make that 10 left."

"Ramirez, report." Danny shouted.

"We have stabilized 4 of them, no sign of the Sergeant yet." Tom replied.

"Down to 7," Charlie screamed.

"Throw all you frags at them." Danny ordered. They all threw enough grenades that could kill a hunter. The rest of the Covenant were killed.

"I've found him sir." Jessica shouted. Danny ran over.

"Tell..m..my..wife..I..I..love her." He said coughing blood.

"Hang on a little bit longer and you can tell her yourself." Danny replied.

The sergeant's breathing slowed down.

"Come on, don't you give up, you're a marine," Danny shouted.

"Sarge, the medics are here," Jessica said.

"Take care of him doc." Danny said as he walked towards his team.

"Staff Sergeant Williams please report to Hangar A-0" The Defence Coordinator said over the intercom.

"Come on guys lets go." Danny said to his team.

02:27 October 20 2552 (Military Calendar),

ODA-142 Cairo Station, orbiting Earth, Sol System.

"Staff Sergeant Williams?" A pilot asked.

"Yeah that's me." Danny replied.

"I'm Flight Officer Chung, I've been ordered to take you to the

surface."

"Ok, everyone get on board" Danny turned to the FO Chung, "Where are we going?"

"London, England."

Looks like I'm going home, Danny thought. He got in and the Pelican's rear hatch closed. The Pelican lifted off the hangar floor, waited for the hangar doors to open and flew out into space.

That was the 2nd chapter

3. Suprise

****Zero Hour****

Chapter Three: Surprise

2:40, October 20 2552 (Military calendar),

Pelican Fox-337, London, England, Earth.

"How far away are we?" Staff Sergeant Daniel Williams asked the co-pilot.

"Two minutes max," He replied, "Awe hell noâ€|we got three banshees on our tail, if I lower the ramp, could one of you use the machine gun?"

Everyone looked at Charlie.

"Alright I'll do it," Charlie replied as he got up and pulled the gun from the roof, "Ready."

The ramp lowered and seven blue plasma blots flew in, one hitting Tom in the chest.

"I sure hope that this isn't what they meant by feel the burn." He said clutching his chest.

Charlie opened fire on the closest banshee. The bullets pinging off its hull.

"Is there a grenade launcher in here?" He asked.

"Might be." The co-pilot replied.

"Might be, huh what kind of a response is that." He muttered.

"We are 30 seconds out guysâ€|.and girl," The co-pilot shouted. "LZ doesn't look that good, how are those banshees doing?"

"I just killed one." Charlie blurted. The pelican slowed and descended.

"We're here, everyone get out." Chung said.

As they got out all they could see was rubble and dead bodies, human and Covenant. As they walked away, there was an explosion. The pelican had been hit by a wraith's plasma mortar.

"Everyone, look for either a rocket launcher or a fuel rod cannon, we are going to need one." Danny said. After a few minutes they had found rockets but not a launcher, well not one that could be used.

"Oh no, that isn't what I think it is, is it?" Jessica said.

"Yeah, that used to be a kid," James said. "Doesn't look older than 7 or 8, poor guy."

"We got company." Tom whispered.

"Hide, quick." Danny said. They ran towards a collapsed building and hid behind a wall. There were heavy footsteps that kept on getting closer. Charlie looked through a hole in the wall and saw 3 Brutes picking up the limbs of humans, Grunts and Elites, he watched as they started ripping the burnt flesh off the limbs and eating it.

"This is sick." He whispered. The rest of them looked through cracks, Jessica and Tom almost puked.

"What are we going to do?" James asked.

"We wait for them to leave." Danny said.

3:55, October 20 2552 (Military Calendar).

"They still here?" Danny asked.

"Yeah, doesn't look like they're full yet." Charlie replied. Suddenly there was a huge explosion.

"What the hellâ€¦" Danny looked through a crack, "Well the Brutes are gone, that's good, hey is that a marine over there?"

"Nah, National Guard, you can tell by the patch on his shoulder." Jessica replied. "Go out and greet him sarge?"

"Might as well, he might know where the nearest marine outpost is." Danny said, getting up. The 5 marines walked over to the soldier.

"Hi, do you know where the nearest marine outpost is?" Danny asked the soldier.

"Well this used to be a marine outpost and the nearest one is miles away, I can take you to the nearest army outpost if you'd like." He replied. "It's only 10 minutes away and we can use my Warthog."

"Do they have a radio or video phone?"

"Yeah, we got a radio,"

"Ok, lead the way."

4:05, October 20 2552 (Military Calendar),

UNSC Army outpost, 2.75 miles outside London.

"Here we are. The Lieutenant should be out back, near the main armory."

"Thanks." Danny and the rest of his team walked over to the main armory, passing inexperienced soldiers that probably wouldn't be alive this time tomorrow and the worst thing about it is they all look around 19.

"Excuse me are you the CO?" Danny asked.

"Yes I am," Lieutenant Beeby replied, "You are?"

"Staff Sergeant Daniel Williams, UNSC Marine Corps, sir."

"Marine Corps? What you are doing here?"

"My team and I were sent from Cairo Station to a marine outpost in South London and by the time we had got there, the outpost had been destroyed."

"Ohâ€¦Was that your Pelican that got hit by the wraith?"

"Yes sir, it was,"

"You may be here a while then. We are having problems with our radio, one minute it's working, one minute later it isn't working so please make yourselves comfortable, I'll send someone to get you when it's working again."

Danny nodded, saluted and walked towards the others.

"Apparently their radio has stopped working, Lt. said to make ourselves comfortable until it's working again." Danny sighed. "Who wants some early breakfast?"

"I do." The others said simultaneously.

"Let's go."

4:11, October 20 2552, (Military Calendar)

Mess Hall, UNSC Army Outpost.

"Hey sarge, were you any good at Gravball?" James asked.

"No, but I was awesome at the Gravball 5 on PC. I won 11 online championships." Danny replied with a smile.

"Were you R-kive?" Tom asked, taking a bite out of his turkey sandwich.

"Yeah why?"

"I was xBitterballx,"

"Ha ha, really? That was a really hard match that we played. You were good."

"Yeah, I was wasn't I."

"Hey isn't that Anna?" Charlie said, pointing to a girl that was sitting three tables down from them.

"It is. Shall I go over?" Danny said.

"Up to you sir, she does look lonely." Jessica said.

Danny looked at her for a couple of seconds.

"Wish me luck." He said standing up.

Danny walked behind her and put his hands on her shoulders.

"Suprise." He said. She looked at him in shock.

"Am I dreaming this?" She said

"Nope, I'm real." Danny said sitting down beside her. "So I see that you joined the National Guard."

"Yep, I wanted to do something to help if Earth was attacked. You're not mad are you?"

"No I'm proud of you. Anyway why would I be mad?"

"You said not to sign up."

"I said that when we were going out because I didn't want to see you getting hurt, I wouldn't have been able to cope."

Anna smiled as she put her arms around his neck and kissed him. The others couldn't believe their eyes.

"Is heâ€|are they?" Jessica said.

"Kissing, yeah I think they are." Tom replied.

"That or it's some kind of weird ritual." James said.

"Ha ha, yeah," Charlie said. "How long are they going to be, it's been 40 seconds and they haven't stopped for air."

Anna and Danny stopped kissing. Danny was as shocked as his team.

"Wow." Danny said. "Why did we break up?"

"I honestly don't know." Anna said. Just then the ground shook .

"What the hell?" James said.

"Get under a table quick." Charlie shouted. A couple seconds later a

large building collapsed right on top of the outpost.

Please R&R Ch.3.

4. An Old Friend

****Zero Hour****

Chapter Four: An Old Friend

4:58, October 20 2552 (Military Calendar),

UNSC Army outpost.

Danny's eyes opened, his vision was blurred, he could hear people screaming, fire extinguishers putting out fires and people trying to free others. He tried to move but he couldn't, he looked down to see a thick steel bar pinning him to the ground. He called out the names of the members of his team but there was no reply. The space around him went dark as he started to lose consciousness.

8:45, October 29 2552 (Military Calendar),

Unknown Location.

Danny's eyes opened again, he could see a monitor beside him. It was showing his vital signs and the results from a Functional MRI scan. He then looked down at his right arm and saw an IV. He heard footsteps coming towards him and looked up to see a nurse.

"Nice to see that you've finally woken up." She said with a smile.
"How are you feeling?"

"Like I've been beaten up." Danny said as he slowly sat up. "Where am I?"

"You're at a hospital in Gibraltar."

Danny looked a bit confused.

"Why Gibraltar?" He asked.

"Most of the hospitals in Europe and all in the UK are either destroyed or full." She replied.

"Where's my team?"

"Over there." she pointed to the end of the room, Jessica was lying down, Tom had a bandage on his left leg, Charlie had a large cut on his forehead and James had a bandage on his lower left arm.

"They ok?"

"They just need some rest, so do you." She said as she went to check up on other patients. Danny signalled Charlie over.

"Hey man, what's up?" Charlie said, sitting down beside him.

"What happened? The last thing I can remember is a loud noise." Danny said.

"A building next to the outpost collapsed, it was a big one. Most of the personnel were killed."

"Damn, how long are we going to be in this place?"

"A couple of days max. James and Tom mainly have bruising, Jessica was knocked out, like you, and I just got hit on the head."

"Thanks, I think I'll have a quick nap."

"Ok, see you later." Charlie said as he got up and walked back over to the others while Danny slowly drifted off.

13:04, November 3 2552 (Military Calendar),

A Hospital in Gibraltar.

"Excuse me sir, are you a marine?" A nurse asked him.

"Yeah, why?" Danny replied.

"The Covenant are here."

Danny leapt out of bed and got his BDU and armor on. As he walked down the nearest staircase he thought about the conversations he had overheard. The Elites and Brutes fighting each other in space and on land, the Hunters and most of the Grunts fighting beside the Elites and the Jackals, Drones and a few Grunts fighting beside the Brutes. If he had to choose a side it would be the Elites.

"How far out are the Covenant?" Danny asked a marine that was manning a turret next to the main entrance.

"They're already here sir, check the waiting room." He replied.

Why are they in the waiting room? He thought as he walked into the waiting room. There were 5 Elites, 20 Grunts and 2 pairs of Hunters standing unarmed and unharmed.

"Seems like we can't stay away from each other." An Elite in spec ops armor said.

Danny just stood there, confused as to what was going on.

"Don't you remember me? Halo, the Flood, how I helped you escape?"

"Zan Tukamee." Danny said. "I thought you wereâ€¦"

"Dead, I almost was." Zan said as he slowly approached Danny. "How have you been?"

"I got smacked by a steel bar, you?"

"Almost got my arm broken by a Brute."

"If you don't mind me asking, why are you here?"

Zan Tukamee took a deep breath.

"I'll start from the beginning. The Master Chief killed the High Prophet of Regret and the High Prophets of Truth and Mercy ordered the Elites to stand down as their protectors. They then gave the duty of guarding them to the Brutes. This and the murders of many high ranking Elites caused an uprising. The Hunters joined the Elites out of respect and most of the grunts did to, the reason some didn't is unknown. A couple of hours ago, we learned the true nature of the Halos and many of us are ashamed about the fact that we believed a lie for so long."

"Wow, there's more than one Halo?"

"Yes. When the High Prophet of Regret fled Earth, he went to another Halo; we have since learned that there were 7 Halos."

"So, why are you here?"

"To help you win this war."

Danny signalled the marines to stand down.

"What weapons you got?"

"12 plasma turrets and a few crates of carbines and plasma rifles."

"How quickly can you deploy all the turrets?"

"About 1 of your hours."

"Ok, let's do this." Danny extended his hand to Zan. Zan started at it for a second and placed his hand in Danny's. Zan turned to the Grunts and Elites and ordered them to deploy turrets a few turrets on 3 floors and to put the rest on the ground floor.

"I don't like this sarge." Jessica said to Danny.

"This Elite saved my life and I'm sure that if any of the others try anything, he will stop them." Danny replied. He then turned towards the other marines in the room. "Alright everybody listen up, if any of these Elites, Grunts or Hunters are harmed, I'll shoot you in the head. You all got that?"

"Yes sir." Everyone shouted.

"Deploy your turrets in co-ordination with the plasma turrets, I don't want a blind spot anywhere and remember, we will defend this hospital at all costs." Danny walked over to the cafeteria to get a drink.

13:56, November 3 2552 (Military Calendar),

A Hospital in Gibraltar.

Zan sat down, helping a Grunt set up a plasma turret.

"Thanks." The Grunt squeaked.

Zan looked up to see a minor domo Elite walking towards him.

"Are you sure we can trust these humans to not harm us?" It asked.

"I'm sure that Staff Sergeant Williams will shoot them if they attempt to." Zan replied. "Now go and help the others set up the turrets."

The Elite nodded and walked away.

"So you're the Elite that saved Danny," Charlie said. "I'm Corporal Charles Ferguson."

"It's an honour to meet you Corporal Ferguson." Zan replied. "I've heard a lot about you"

"Likewise, how come you speak English so well?"

"I learned it from several marines that were taken prisoner."

"Did you free them?"

"I didn't have the opportunity like I did with Staff Sergeant Williams. I wish that I could have."

Charlie nodded and beckoned Zan over.

"What are these Halos? All the info regarding them is classified and Danny wouldn't tell me."

"They are ring shaped devices that when activated, destroy all sentient life in a particular space. If the remaining 6 were activated at the same time, all life would end."

"Wow, Danny has been on one of these things?"

"Yes, he was on the 7th one, which was later destroyed by the one you call Master Chief."

Zan walked over to a window. "I'm afraid that that is all I can tell you at the moment."

"That's fine. Hey if you need anything I'll be in the cafeteria." Charlie said as he walked off.

14:13, November 3 2552 (Military Calendar),

A Hospital in Gibraltar.

A grunt in red armor ran towards Danny screaming something.

"Calm down little guy, what is it?" Danny asked it.

The Grunt gave him a data pad showing the live feed from the motion scanners. It showed a large force moving towards the hospital. Danny ran to the intercom.

"All medical personnel please make your way to the rear of the building. All combat personnel get ready." Danny grabbed his MA5C and turned the safety off. "Here they come."

5. Tables Have Turned

****Zero Hour****

Chapter Five: Tables Have Turned.

14:13, November 3 2552 (Military Calendar),

A Hospital in Gibraltar.

Plasma and red hot metal spikes bombarded the main entrance to the hospital. Glass was shattering and metal was melting.

"Zan, where are those metal spikes coming from?" Tom screamed.

"Brute made spike rifles. Believe me; you don't want to be hit by one of the spikes." Zan replied firing his carbine. Charlie ran into the room, carrying a wounded Grunt. He was closely followed by injured Elites, Grunts and 2 marines.

"What happened?" Danny asked, throwing a frag outside.

"A fuel rod canon hit our position, 4 Grunts are dead and most plasma cannons were destroyed." Charlie said looking at the Grunt in his arms. "This guy needs help ASAP."

An Elite walked over and took the Grunt out of his arms. The Elite looked at the wounds and then grunted.

"Hayap will be fine." Zan said to Charlie. Just then 5 rounds from fuel rod cannons blasted through the windows. The glowing green fuel rods smashing into the ceiling, sending parts flying. Jessica got covered in dust and insulation padding.

"At least I'm staying warm." She said as she fired their only rocket launcher. "Bulls eye."

The HEAT rocket smashed into a pack of brutes killing them and igniting grenades which killed a group of Jackals standing right next to them.

"Not only beautiful, but a great shot too." James said smiling at her.

"Put a sock in it lover boy, we got trouble." Danny said as a scarab walked into view. "Zan how effective are the cannons on Hunters against one of those things?"

"It depends on where they hit it. If they hit where the legs join, we can disable it." Zan replied.

"Can you tell your Hunters to do that please?"

"Already have."

Four green beams of plasma impacted each leg, sparks flying out of each one. The Scarab's main gun started to glow.

"EVERYONE GET DOWN." Danny screamed as he jumped onto the floor.

The main gun on the Scarab fired; it smashed through the building leaving a large hole in it. Rubble raining down on everyone. The Elites and Hunters used their shields to protect everyone. Marines were screaming in pain, one of them was Tom.

"What's wrong?" Jessica asked.

"I think my right shoulder's dislocated." Tom said. Grunts and marines helped each other up, forgetting about the fact that they used to kill each other. Nurses ran in and started helping the injured marines. An Elite walked over to Tom and popped his shoulder back in. It lowered its head and walked away.

"Thank you." Tom said as he got a shot of pain killers.

Danny limped towards Zan who was cleaning a cut on his left arm.

"Have you got a radio or something similar?" He asked.

"Over there." Zan replied pointing at a box. Danny limped over and scanned all frequencies, looking for a UNSC channel. He turned around to the marines and said "Keep firing."

Danny stopped the scanning when he heard Lord Hoods' voice. He opened a link.

"This is Staff Sergeant Daniel Williams, please come in, over."

"What can I do for you Staff Sergeant?"

"I need air support bad sir, we are about to lose a hospital."

"Can you designate the target?"

"I've got a panic button will that do?"

"Yes, where are you?"

"East coast of Gibraltar sir."

"Skyhawks, Sparrowhawks and Shortswords are inbound, eta 3 minutes. Hood out."

Danny ran over to a Charlie.

"Can you take the explosive out of a rocket and put these in within 2 minutes?" Danny asked showing him 7 panic buttons.

"Yeah, I can do it." Charlie said. Danny passed him the panic buttons and walked over to a turret and started firing. Danny quickly looked around to his left; James' turret wasn't firing properly.

"What's wrong?" Danny asked.

"It keeps jamming." James replied as he checked the ammo still in the drum, "The ammo's melted."

"We haven't got any spare drums so use your rifle." Danny said. James nodded and started firing his BR55.

There was an explosion on the left side of the hospital and Brutes started running in.

"Awe hell." Danny said as he withdrew his M6G and fired two rounds. The first HE round hit a Brute's helmet, knocking it off, the second round slammed into the Brute's face sending bits of bone and brains everywhere. There was a roar as one of the Hunters died, its mate charged into the Brutes, killing some with its shield and injuring others before it died. Danny saw a Brute sneaking up on Zan and the 3 remaining Elites. He looked down and saw an energy sword lying next to the body of an Elite, he grabbed it, activated it and ran over to Zan and shoved it into the Brute that was behind him. The Brute howled in pain, trying to reach for a grenade but Zan grabbed his sword and beheaded it.

"Thank you for saving my life." Zan said.

"I was just returning the favour." Danny replied as he ran over to Charlie.

"Don't worry, almost got it done." Charlie said, passing Danny the rocket launcher. "Rocket is inside."

"Thanks." Danny said. "Everyone move out the way of the door."

Everyone moved out of the way and Danny fired the rocket launcher, the rocket flew into a group of Jackals. They were confused because it didn't harm them; a Brute Chieftain walked over and picked it up just as missiles from Sparrowhawks and Skyhawks started to rain down on them. The scarab was blown to smithereens by bombs from Short Swords.

"Everyone focus on the Brutes that are in the building." Danny shouted. Marines and Grunts left their turrets and withdrew their pistols. Green blobs of plasma and HE bullets hit the Brutes, blood spraying everywhere.

"Staff Sergeant Williams?" A marine in a UNSCMC baseball cap asked.

"Over here." Danny shouted back.

"Marines help those guys out." The man said as he walked over to him. "I'm Sergeant Major Reid, what's the situation?"

"Most of the Grunts are wounded bad, 7 marines are out back getting treated by nurses."

"What do you mean by Grunts?"

"Them." Danny pointed at a Grunt that was shooting at a Brute.

"Why are they alive?"

"We needed the man power and I trust their leader with my life."

"What? Are you serious?"

"Yeah, that Elite," Danny pointed at Zan, "Saved my life and helped me get back home."

Sergeant Reid looked like he was about to strangle him.

"Move." Zan shouted as he ran towards them wielding his energy sword. He lunged at Reid; the blade flew past his head and went straight into a Brutes' body. It screamed trying to free itself. Reid's expression changed from anger to shock.

"Do you trust me now?" Zan said, his eyes staring straight into Reid's.

"I...Iâ€¦I guess so." Sergeant Reid said.

"Down to 3." Jessica shouted.

"You keeping count babe?" James said smirking.

"Shut it, you lame excuse for a marine." She replied. "One left."

"Head shot." Tom said finishing the last Brute off. Everyone sat down, finally getting a breather. Grunts went to get their tanks refilled with methane.

"Why are the Covenant fighting each other?" Sergeant Reid asked.

"Zan, do you thing." Danny said as he walked to his team. "You guys alright?"

All four of them nodded.

15:03, November 3 2552 (Military Calendar)

"Sergeant Williams I just got new orders for you." Sergeant Reid said. "Your heading to Africa."

"Alright gang, lets move out." Danny said. They walked over to the waiting Pelican. Everyone except Danny sat down.

"Hey Sergeant Major, if Zan dies, so do you."

"Is that a threat Staff Sergeant?"

"Nah, that's a god damn promise." Danny sat down and the rear hatch of the Pelican closed. The Pelican lifted off the ground and banked left.

"Everyone get some shut-eye, we're going to need it." Danny said as he took of his helmet and fingerless gloves and put them on the seat

to his right.

6. Kill or be killed

-1**Zero Hour**

Chapter Six: Kill Or Be Killed.

16:27, November 3 2552 (Military Calendar)

6 miles from Voi, Africa, Earth

"We're 5 minutes out, get ready." The Pilot shouted over his radio.

Danny started putting his helmet back on when the pelican shook violently.

"Dammit, I'm losing her. Crows Nest this is Alpha-157 we are going down, I repeat we are going down."

"What's going on?" Danny shouted.

"An Anti-air wraith took out our engines." The co-pilot replied.
"Brace yourselves."

Everybody held on tightly as the pelican impacted the ground.

"Dannyâ€|hey, wake up."

Danny's eyes slowly started to open.

"Iâ€|I can't feel my legs." The co-pilot cried as Charlie hauled him out of the wreckage.

"Calm down, everything's going to be fine."

Danny was helped on his feet by Tom.

"Status?" Danny said wincing in pain as he tried to walk.

"Pilot's dead, co-pilot's paralyzed from the waist down, me and Tom only have a few cuts and heavy bruising," Charlie looked over to his right.

"Jessica's dead, James will be to if we don't get him to a hospital."

"Damnâ€|Tom, you mind checking me with a scanner?"

"On it boss."

Tom grabbed a medical scanner out of a med kit and started scanning Danny's body.

"Apart from a few cuts and bruises you should be fine sir," Tom looked over at James "If his side of the pelican hadn't come off when we crashed he would have been fine."

Danny grabbed his rifle and walked over to James who was holding Jessica's dog tags. He looked down and shook his head.

"Charlie, grab her ammo andâ€¦" Danny's voice was drowned out by an all too familiar howl. "Hide, NOW."

Danny and Charlie dragged James and the co-pilots bodies and hid them behind some rocks.

"Be quite," Danny said before shouldering his MA5C. He looked over at Jessica's corpse, he knew what the Brutes would do to her when they found her but there wasn't enough time to run out, grab her and bring her back. His ear-piece crackled.

"I see 1 Major and 4 Minors." Tom whispered over his COM.

"Roger that, get to cover." He replied. He watched as the brutes walked down the hill towards the crash site. They had their Type-25 Carbines (spikers) upholstered, ready to gun down any human that had survived the crash. The Major pointed at the pelican, grunted and then barked, the translation software in the marine's helmets took a second to roughly translate it into 'Search.'

"I got a shot," Charlie whispered into Danny's ear. Danny shook his head. If they fired now the Brutes would be able to flank them, he had to wait until they were closer to the pelican. One of the Minors had spotted Jessica's corpse and yelped in excitement, probably because it could get a meal. The Major pushed him out of the way and went to check the body. After checking for vitals it said something along the lines of 'It's dead, lets feast'.

"I don't think so." Danny whispered before keying his COM. "Fire at will."

The 3 marines opened up with their MA5Cs.

They had obviously caught the Brutes of guard as they killed one of the Minors before it managed to get to cover. The other Brutes ran and hid behind rocks and bits of the pelican. After collecting themselves they returned fire. A volley of superheated metal spikes flew towards the marines, one spike grazed the top of Tom's helmet, forcing him to take it off until it cooled down.

"Reloading." Tom screamed. Danny looked over and saw a Brute slowly walking over to Tom's position.

"Tom, listen very carefully. There's a Brute approaching your position, can't be more than 4 meters away, I want you to be quiet, keep your head down and throw a frag behind you when I say."

Tom looked over at Danny and gave him a thumbs up. Charlie tapped Danny on the shoulder.

"Apart from the Brute near Tom, we got one left."

Danny looked at Tom and gave him a thumbs up. Tom pulled the pin and threw it behind the block of concrete he was hiding behind. He quickly grabbed his helmet and put it on before the frag detonated, creating a thick cloud of dust. Danny followed the frag with a couple

controlled bursts from his MA5C. As he waited for the dust to settle a spike hit an empty coffee cup, sending the now boiling liquid all over him. He cursed and emptied his magazine into the Brute Major, severely wounding it. Suddenly the ground started shaking, litter was thrown into the air. They looked up to see a CCS-class Battlecruiser fly over their heads. For a moment pain left the marine's bodies, Charlie made some comment on how he wanted an anti-grav field in his flat if it was still around. The Brute Major took advantage of the situation and hid behind one of the pelican's engines that had been torn off when it crashed. It raised it's spiker, pointing it at Danny's head. The Brute put a finger in the trigger and began to squeeze. There was a loud crack, the Marines looked around and saw the Brute Major's body minus a head.

"Now, why have I always got to rescue you?" A familiar voice said over the COM, a Warthog's engine at full throttle in the background. "Oh yeah that's right, I didn't train you, Byrne did."

A M831 Troop Transport Warthog appeared out of nowhere.

"Get in. A pelican will be here in a few minutes to pick up the dead and wounded."

"Thanks Johnson." Danny said.

"Hey, that's Sergeant Major to you." Johnson said with a grin as he turned the hog around. "Next stop Crow's Nest."

The Warthog raced down the path it had been a few seconds earlier.

"What are we going to do when we get there sir?" Charlie asked SgtMaj Johnson.

"First you get yourselves checked out, then you gear up and meet your new squad membersâ€¦Then, we go get the Chief." Avery replied.

End
file.